

**Remarks by
U.S. Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans
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[As prepared for delivery]

Good afternoon. I'm delighted to be here. This is Louis' show ... so no long speeches. But I wanted to drop by to say how very important it is that every business and company in America fill out and return the Economic Census. It comes around only once every 5 years ... so it shouldn't be a big deal.

But it will be a big deal if you don't fill it out. We need this information so President Bush ... his economic team ... and other economic leaders can make better economic policy.

Local communities need it so they can figure out how best to attract companies and serve them better.

And businesses rely on the census data to help them determine where to locate a new plant ... to find a new market ... and to create new jobs.

What's more, the data companies submit provide the primary benchmark for measuring 96 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is the main gauge used to track the ups and downs of the American economy.

So there's a lot riding on the Economic Census.

As a former businessman and member of President Bush's economic team, I know first-hand that you can't make good decisions without good information.

When President Bush took the oath of office 22 months ago, our economy was moving into a recession.

The President and his economic team recognized this early on ... in part because we had good economic data.

As a result, we acted quickly to devise and implement a tax-cut package that put our economy back on the road to recovery.

The tax cut pumped \$40 billion back into the pockets of American consumers ... just when the economy and the American people needed it the most.

Thanks to the tax cut and the President's leadership, the recession was one of the shortest and shallowest since World War II.

We have endured what Chairman Greenspan called "a soft spot" in the economy.

Now, we've had four straight quarters of economic growth, averaging about 3% ... according to the latest GDP numbers.

And there are some very positive signs about the strength of the economy.

Consumer confidence is on the rise ... home sales are strong ... inflation is low ... and productivity remains strong.

We know this because much of the data come from information collected by the census.

But that's not to say that we are out of the woods just yet. This recovery continues to be uneven. Far too many people are out of a job this Holiday season.

President Bush knows that this economy is not growing at its fullest potential.

He is looking forward to working with his new economic team and the new Congress to devise pro-growth economic policies that will create jobs and continue this recovery.

And again, I urge every business to get their survey back to the Census Bureau as quickly as possible.

America is counting on you!

Thank you very much.